

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-07 SAJ-01 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAM-01 /080 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3717

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 1310

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINR, LY

SUBJ: MINISTER OF STATE FOR RCC AFFAIRS THAIR AL

SHARIF BEN AMIR: POSSIBLE NEW PRIME MINISTER

REF: TRIPOLI 1026, 1170

1. SPECULATION HAS EXISTED FOR SOMETIME CONCERNING QADHAFI'S INTENTION TO REPLACE HIS PRESENT PM, MAJOR ABDEL AS SALEM JALLUD (REFTELS), AND SEVERAL POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS HAVE BEEN RUMORED. HOWEVER, THE NAME OF THAIR AL SHARIF BEN AMIR, THE PRESENT MINISTER OF STATE FOR RCC AFFAIRS, HAS SURFACED WITH RECURRING FREQUENCY IN RECENT WEEKS AS THE INDIVIDUAL QADHAFI INTENDS TO APPOINT AS HIS NEW PM, POSSIBLE AS EARLY AS NOVEMBER DURING GENERAL SESSION OF POPULAR PEOPLES CONGRESS.

2. BEN AMIR, WHO REPORTEDLY COMES FROM ONE OF LIBYA'S OLDEST AND LARGEST FAMILIES OF BENGHAZI, RECEIVED HIS UNIVERSITY TRAINING IN ENGLAND. HE HAS A B.S. IN CIVIL ENGINEERING. DURING REIGN OF PREVIOUS IDRIS REGIME, HE WAS UNDER SECRETARY OF MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND APPEARED ON SEVERAL EMBASSY GUEST LISTS OF THAT PERIOD.

3. UNDER QADHAFI'S REGIME, HE INITIALLY HELD POSITION

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AS DIRECTOR OF MINISTRY OF COMMERCE ATOMIC ENERGY COUNCIL.

HE HAS SINCE HELD PORTFOLIOS AS MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION.

4. CLOSE FRIEND OF BEN AMIR DESCRIBES HIM AS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES. DURING RECENT MEETING WITH CHARGE HE WAS COURTEOUS, CORDIAL AND INTERESTED IN U.S. AFFAIRS, ATTITUDES NOT SO COMMON IN LIBYAN OFFICIALS. UNSURPRISINGLY, HIS "OFFICIAL" ATTITUDE STRICTLY REFLECTS THAT OF COL. QADHAFI.

5. BEN AMIR IS DESCRIBED BY VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS WHO KNOW OR HAVE MET HIM AS A "YES" MAN FOR QADHAFI. HIS REPORTEDLY MILD-MANNER AND POLITENESS HAS CAUSED OBSERVERS TO DESCRIBE HIM AS "WEAK AND INCAPABLE OF HOLDING DOWN POSITION OF PM. HOWEVER, BEN AMIR ALSO HAS REPUTATION OF BEING THE MOST CAPABLE OF ADMINISTRATORS IN LIBYAN GOVERNMENT. IT IS RUMORED THAT QADHAFI ATTEMPTED TO NAME HIM PM AS EARLY AS 1973. HE IS REPORTEDLY HIGHLY REGARDED BY TUNISIAN AUTHORITIES WITH WHOM HE NEGOTIATED LIBYAN-TUNISIAN CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE IN AUGUST OF THIS YEAR.

COMMENT: QADHAFI'S SPEECHES OF JULY 23, AND SEPTEMBER 1, (REFTELS) SUGGEST PM JALLUD'S REPLACEMENT WILL BE FROM CIVILIAN RATHER THAN MILITARY RANKS. WHILE NOT EVEN LIBYANS WILL VENTURE TO SECOND-GUESS WHAT QADHAFI PLANS NEXT, IT IS NEVERTHELESS POSSIBLE THAT BEN AMIR'S CHARACTERISTICS OF COMPETENCE AND OBEDIENCE ARE WELL SUITED TO QADHAFI'S IMAGE OF AN IDEAL PM.  
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**TAGS:** PGOV, PINR, LY, (JALLUD, ABD AL-SALAM), (BEN AMIR, AL SHARIF)  
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